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2684 Thornbrook Rd.
Ellicott City, MD 21042
August 14, 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers La., Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852
Docket Nos. 98N-1230, 96P-0418, and 97P-0197

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to comment on the docket numbers listed above. I would like to encourage you to ban the practice of forced molting in hens. I believe that this is the most effective and direct way to reduce salmonella in eggs. As you probably know, forced molting is an inhumane practice in which the birds are deprived of food for up to two weeks, water is restricted up to eight weeks, and they are kept in pitch dark for many weeks. It throws the hens' systems into collapse, stressing their bodies into laying one more batch of eggs before being slaughtered. Forced molting results in hundreds of thousands of dead birds, and the survivors grow weak, shed their feathers, and lose up to thirty-five percent of their body weight. It also increases the frequency and severity of *Salmonella enteritidis* among hens. The stressful conditions weaken their immune systems so badly that they become prone to disease and salmonella infections. The result is sick birds and contaminated eggs.

Eliminating forced molting would not only be more humane to the hens, but it would also be the best way to reduce salmonella in eggs. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

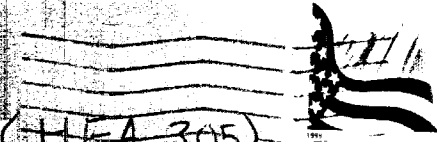
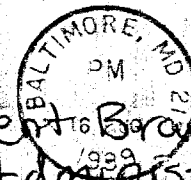

Cathy Kunkel

96P-0418

C277



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CROSS FILE SHEET

File Number: 98N-1230/ **C277**

See File Number: 97P-0197/ **C278**

96P-041S/ **C277**